

Message Text

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ACTION AGRE-00

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 EB-07 COME-00 CIAE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 /025 W

-----053670 230920Z /12

R 230736Z JUN 77

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7235

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EARG, TS

SUBJ: TUNISIAN GRAIN PRODUCTION ESTIMATES

REF: STATE 131786

1. ALTHOUGH RAINS CAME IN LATE MARCH AND CONTINUED THROUGH APRIL AND MAY, THE 77 CEREALS CROP IS EXPECTED TO BE WELL BELOW THE AVERAGE OF RECENT YEARS. ESTIMATES OF THE CROP VARY WIDELY DEPENDING ON THE SOURCE, BUT THERE IS GENERAL AGREEMENT THAT VIRTUALLY THE ENTIRE CROP IN THE CENTER AND SOUTH HAS BEEN LOST. THE NORTH, THE HEART OF THE CEREALS AREA, RECOVERED NICELY WITH THE RAIN, BUT WILL AT BEST BE 80 PERCENT OF LAST YEAR.

2. OFFICIALS AT THE OFFICE OF CEREALS AND THE WHEAT COOPERATIVE PLACE THE TOTAL CROP (INCLUDING HARD AND SOFT WHEAT AND BARLEY) AT 700,000 MT AS COMPARED TO THE 1,150,000 TONS IN 1976. BARLEY PRODUCTION IS ESTIMATED TO BE MINIMAL DUE TO THE EXTENDED DROUGHT IN THE SOUTH. FIRM OFFICIAL NUMERICAL ESTIMATES ARE NOT YET AVAILABLE.

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3. IN LIGHT OF THE EXPECTED CROP, AND THE 1.3 MILLION MT CONSUMPTION REQUIREMENT, THE OFFICE OF CEREALS IS EXPECTING TO IMPORT OVER 500,000 MT DURING THE 1977/1978 SEASON. THE PRINCIPAL TUNISIAN GRAIN PORT (LA GOULETTE) CAN THEORETICALLY HANDLE OVER 700,000 TONS OF ARRIVALS ARE PERFECTLY SCHEDULED OVER THE YEAR, THUS THE PROJECTED IMPORTS SHOULD NOT POSE A LOGISTICS PROBLEM PROVIDED SHIPMENTS ARRIVE WELL-SPACED.

4.ALL CONTACTS NOTED THE SERIOUS PROBLEMS FACING FARMERS IN
THE CENTER AND SOUTH WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED TOTAL CROP LOSS DUE
TO DROUGHT.
MULCAHY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, GRAINS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 23-Jun-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977TUNIS04402
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770224-0402
Format: TEL
From: TUNIS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770625/aaaaavpf.tel
Line Count: 67
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 4ff5ce77-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AGRE
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 STATE 131786
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2052415
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TUNISIAN GRAIN PRODUCTION ESTIMATES
TAGS: EAGR, EPAP, TS
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/4ff5ce77-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009